

Concordia University

COUNCIL OF THE FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCE

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday, November 6, 1987

Present: C. Bertrand, Chair; L. Bonin, Secretary;
 R. Martin; J. Appleby; D. Dicks; F. Shlosser;
 G. Valaskakis; H. McQueen; J. Gavin; R. Cronin, s.j.;
 R. Pallen; E. Preston; D. Murphy; W. Knitter;
 G. Auchinachie; R. Kilgour; L. Van Toch; K. Mukherji;
 G. Decarie; J. Locke; W. Byers; C. Barton; J. McGraw;
 S. Dubas, s.j.; D. Salee; T. Arbuckle-Maag; M. Oppenheim;
 J. Drysdale; G. Newsham; J. Ryan; R. Hooper; R. Zienius
 (for G. Trudel); H. Shulman; C. Davis; D. Shapiro;
 E. Henrik (for M. Verthuy); R. Seppanenn; D. White;
 D. Jean; R. Orr; K. Johnston; J. King; A. Macpherson;
 S. Kogan; C. Buttner; S. O'Hara; A. Madsen; S. Maguire;
 P. Taslimi; M. Valihora.

Regrets: P. Albert; M. Barlow; G. Szamosi.

Guest: Mr. F. Papineau, Director, Physical Plant.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:40 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

87-9-1 It was moved and seconded (Macpherson/Drysdale)
 to approve the agenda. Vote: Carried.

3. Approval of Minutes of October 2, 1987 and
 October 23, 1988

87-9-2 It was moved and seconded (Pallen/Davis) to approve the
 Minutes of October 2, 1987.

The second sentence of the final paragraph on p.3 was
 reworded: He felt that the University should have made
 more of the fact that several people were invited to this
 prestigious meeting.

The second sentence of paragraph 3 on page 6 was reworded:
 E. Preston stated that Classics supported the addition in
 order to provide students who wished to continue their
 studies at Concordia the opportunity to do so.
 Vote: Carried.

87-9-3 It was moved and seconded (Drysdale/Maguire) to approve the Minutes of October 23, 1987. Vote: Carried.

4. Mr. F. Papineau, Director of Physical Plant

The Dean welcomed Mr. Frank Papineau to the meeting.

Mr. Papineau fielded questions on a wide variety of topics, e.g. the constant breakdown of the Hall Building escalators; the dangerous driving habits of outside shuttle bus drivers; inadequate furniture in some classrooms and inadequate ventilation in others; problems with the building housing Liberal Arts College, Concordia's control over rental space; the lack of shuttle bus service during the summer evenings.

Mr. Papineau requested that complaints/observations on items falling under his jurisdiction be referred to his office, local 4838. He noted that problems with the shuttle bus could be referred to Mr. Bill Gerecum (3734-LOY) or Mr. Yves Gilbert (3753-SGW), Operation Managers. One member noted that departments never seemed to receive notification of work to be done in their areas. Mr. Papineau agreed that the co-ordination might be better and said that he had already alerted his staff to this problem. On the matter of asbestos fibres in the air, testing revealed that there are no asbestos fibres in the air in ER annex; testing has been done on the air in the Norris Building but the analysis has not yet been received.

C. Bertrand thanked Mr. Papineau for attending the meeting.

5. Chairperson's Remarks

C. Bertrand stressed the importance of the Day of Action and read excerpts from Dr. Kenniff's letter of 4 November to members of the Concordia Community. This letter was to be distributed to all full and part-time faculty so that it might be read to their classes and thus increase awareness of the Day of Action and its implications. C. Bertrand urged that faculty continue to pressure the Ministry of Education. M. Cohen, Vice-Rector Institutional Relations and Finance is in charge of planning the Day of Action and would welcome ideas.

Ritva Seppanen (English) and Deena White (Sociology and Anthropology) have been elected to serve one-year terms as the PT faculty representatives on Faculty Council.

On the matter of buildings being opened on weekends for study purposes, the Vice-Rector, Services felt such access was rendered unnecessary by the restoration of library hours.

6. Questions and Announcements

It was asked if the Search Committee for the Appointment of a Director for the Institute of Co-operative Education would have a member representing the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science now that Computer Science has opted for the co-op format. C. Bertrand replied that the Search Committee was a committee of the Faculty of Arts and Science and that he intended to appoint someone from Building Studies or Computer Science to that Committee.

Concern was expressed over the time lost to classes by the November 17 Day of Action and by the assemblies to be held November 10. It was asked if the time might be recovered by the scheduling of a second 'makeup' day. C. Bertrand replied that the sessions on the 10th should not be too disruptive as this activity was to be more or less ongoing. He noted that the Rector had not said that classes would be cancelled, only that they would be rescheduled to a later date. C. Bertrand agreed to raise the issue of a second 'makeup' day with Dr. M. Cohen.

Council's attention was drawn to the fact that CUSA was sending a delegation to Quebec City on 12 November in conjunction with reforms to loans and bursaries. It was noted that it would be helpful if faculty could reschedule term papers and exams or at least be lenient towards students who needed extra time for assignments if they cited their involvement with this protest.

One member noted that the Faculty Appeals Committee had sent a memo to the Dean expressing the view that students often do not like sending their original marked works to an evaluation committee. It was felt that the re-evaluation would be influenced by a colleague's corrections. It was suggested that the work could be retyped before it was sent to an evaluator.

C. Bertrand replied that his office was still trying to deal with this difficult issue. F. Shlosser remarked that the process was one of re-evaluation; it was necessary that the original system of evaluation be seen.

The delay in validation of ID cards and the problems that this posed for those wishing entry to McGill's graduate

library was mentioned. C. Bertrand noted that this year the delay was caused by the deletion of the SIN number from the cards. He agreed to ask Vice-Rector Cohen if cards could be validated at the end of September in future years.

With regard to the consolidation of Political Science on the Loyola Campus, it was asked if the inconveniences to SGW students had been considered. C. Bertrand replied that the department had made the decision to move into the Vanier Library space after carefully weighing all pros and cons. The University planned to sell the Centennial Building which was in an advanced state of disrepair. As for the size of offices in the Vanier Library, these conformed to the Quebec space norms.

7. Ratification of student members to various committees of Faculty Council

The following students were ratified as members and welcomed to Council:

- a) Arts and Science Curriculum Committee
 - 2 UG students: Linda Piovesan (PHIL)
 - Andrew Madsen (ENGL)
 - 1 G student: Madelaine McBrearty (RELI)
- b) Arts and Science Faculty Panel
(Academic Regulations Regarding Cheating)
 - 6 UG students: Bettina Rosenberg (POLI)
 - Leonel Regimbal (PSYC)
 - Michael Valihora (ECON)
 - Ken Johnson (SCPA)
 - Sonia Cancian (FRAN)
 - Sandra Kugan (BIOL)
- c) Faculty Appeal Committee
(Regulations Regarding Academic Re-evaluation)
 - 2 UG students: Carl Buttner (GEOG)
 - James King (POLI)
 - 2 UG student alternates:
 - Sean Maguire (ICE)
 - Sandra Kugan (BIOL)
- d) Faculty Honours Committee
 - 1 student alternate member (B.A. or B.Sc. Honours)
 - Sean Maguire (ICE)

e) Student Request Committee

1 UG student: Alex Macpherson (GEOG)
 1 UG student alternate:
 Carlo Buttner (GEOG)

f) ASFC Steering Committee

2 students: Randy Orr (HIST)
 Dominic Jean (ECON)

g) ASFC student members

16 undergraduates

Shawn O'Hara (POLI)
 James King (POLI)
 Dominic Jean (ECON)
 Michael Valihora (ECON)
 Carlo Buttner (GEOG)
 Kerry Adler (ECON)
 Alex Macpherson (GEOG)
 Jim Bardis (PHIL)
 Randy Orr (HIST)
 Maxine Clarke (POLI)
 Linda Piovesan (PHIL)
 Andrew Madsen (ENGL)
 Sean Maguire (ICE)
 Sandra Kugan (BIOL)
 Kenneth Johnston (TESL)
 L-J Regimbal (PSYC)

2 graduate students:

Paul Taslimi (CHEM)
 TBA

8. Establishment of Prizes in Journalism

87-9-4 After some confusion over the naming of the two prizes in Journalism, it was moved and seconded (Decarie/Maguire) to table the item to the next meeting of Council.
 Vote: Carried.

9. G.P.A. Report (ASFC 87-9-D1)

D. Dicks explained that this item had been tabled last May pending further information reflected in the document entitled 'Forecasting the Impact of a GPA standard in Arts and Science'. He noted that the present system of a "failed - may reregister" category and a "failed - may

not reregister" category operated inefficiently. The proposal was more or less parallel to the system operating in the Faculty of Commerce. D. Dicks noted that a sampling of 80% of Arts and Science graduates over the last five years revealed that roughly 8% would be in the failed category (i.e. GPA less than 1.5) at graduation.

It was moved and seconded (Dicks/Pallen) to adopt the Calendar entry as listed on the final page of document ASFC 87-9-D1, Section 31.003.1 - Performance Requirements in Arts and Science.

One member noted that a failure rate of "18% above historical levels" could translate into failing one-third of the student body at one time, and that as many as 50% of the student body could conceivably be on probation at the same time.

D. Dicks thought it more likely that the failure rate would reach only the 25% mark; 60% or more of students with 'probationary' status were expected to recover and reach 'good standing' status. The G.P.A. could also encourage students to do better and it was not known what impact this might have in the opposite direction.

It was suggested that if the GPA were an overall GPA, students might look for 'easy' courses to raise their overall GPA and that perhaps two GPA's could be calculated, one overall GPA and one for the courses in the major. D. Dicks replied that Faculty has a problem in defining the structure of many of its majors. R. Martin added that the system could only support a proposal based on an annual rather than a cumulative grade point average.

One member suggested the proposal was harsh as a 'C' student would be classed as marginal. Also, the implications for advising were enormous as students' GPA's fluctuated from 'conditional' to 'probationary'. It was asked if other models had been considered.

D. Dicks replied that the 'C' rule passed by ASFC a year ago had been stalled by the Academic Programmes Committee and may be an issue at the next Senate meeting.

One member felt that the minimum annual GPA, if established, should be 1.5 rather than 2.0, as 1.5 was the border between 'C' and 'D'. It was noted that the type of advising done would change; career counselling as opposed to academic course advising would need to be done. If students are not able to keep up the GPA, what are the alternatives that we can offer them?

One member wondered how grade inflation was affecting the real number of students achieving a GPA of less than 1.5, and suggested that the standard within different departments be looked at very carefully in terms of how many students are really passing or failing. A standard is needed for our reputation.

It was mentioned that a better mix of intake students, i.e. more national and international students, could increase standards somewhat.

It was noted that Engineering, in raising its GPA, did raise the final overall academic achievement of its students. Students who have several 'D's' must retake these courses as well as those in which they failed.

In defence of the GPA, F. Shlosser noted that the GPA allowed a look at the entire performance of a student rather than focussing on individual grades. She supported having the same GPA as the other faculties; a lower GPA could lead to the idea that the Faculty of Arts and Science sets lower standards. She supported the idea that career counselling was not the role of the advisor.

One member felt that a standard was necessary and that lack of one was a disservice to students. Poor students would be robbed of their hard-earned money if they obtained a degree but were, in fact, unemployable in their field. Good students were penalized as their degrees were somewhat devalued by the fact that they graduated with mediocre or poor students. It was noted that the Co-op Executive Committee was entertaining the idea of raising the Co-op GPA to 2.3. It was felt that enrolments would not drop if people could be convinced that Concordia is a quality institution.

One member wished to know what the Faculty could offer students who fall below the GPA. Concordia's tradition of helping the PT student and helping students in general overcome certain difficulties was noted. It was suggested that perhaps a remedial programme as part of the graduation requirement be instituted.

R. Martin noted that Engineering and Commerce, in instituting the GPA, had as their objective the desire to have students graduate at the 'C' level (1.7). In order to ensure that this was the ultimate result, the GPA was set slightly higher (2.0) to allow for the fluctuations. It was necessary, he said, to differentiate between conditional and probationary standing. A GPA of 1.5 to 2.0 resulted in conditional standing. This only meant

that the student was expected to return to a GPA of 2.0 the following year. At this point students were not on probation. Probation was for those students who were failed and subsequently readmitted. If readmitted, a student was expected to retain a GPA of 2.0 (good standing); otherwise they would enter the 'failed, may not reregister' category.

One member commented that students who do not meet the GPA can be required to return and repeat some of the courses with low values to increase their GPA.

It was asked if the Committee had looked at other universities which have grade point averages applied in the same way. What were their models, and how does the GPA work for them? If other universities have a similar system, then their enrolments must have increased or been maintained so that their finances are not jeopardized by government funding. We then would not have a worry in the long run if we were to apply good standards.

One member felt that there was broad support in several departments for the establishment of a GPA, and that if Council did not move in this direction it would be faced by departmental proposals to establish some kind of GPA control, either for programmes of concentration or for moving from 30 to 60 credits or 60 to 90 credits. Different standards applicable to different frames of reference would be an unacceptable result.

A few problems were noted. The GPA, now calculated annually at the end of May, would be of no use to the registration process during March or April; the timing of early registration would have to be shifted. For those departments that wished to give special advising to students who were in the 'conditional' category, the lack of the GPA would pose an extra burden on the process.

The question of phasing-in the GPA requirement was raised and it was asked if consideration had been given to any model utilizing a phase-in period. D. Dicks replied that the Curriculum Committee had not considered this aspect but that a change of this type would have to apply to everyone when put in place. It would be unfair to have different standards utilized when students were competing for the same places in the university.

One member felt uncomfortable with the obscure mechanics of the proposal. Another thought that the Faculty could improve the quality of its students and forewarn students if they were in difficulty by means other than a GPA.

It was moved and seconded (Arbuckle-Maag/Byers) to table the motion on the floor to the February meeting of Council, pending a report by the Curriculum Committee on other models of the GPA.

Vote: Carried (18 for, 15 opposed).

Graduate Curriculum Course Changes (ASFC 87-9-D2)

i) M.A., Ph.D. in History

87-9-5 It was moved and seconded (Dicks/Decarie) to adopt the changes suggested to the M.A. and Ph.D. in History as proposed in document ASFC 87-9-D2. Vote: Carried.

87-9-6 ii) M.A. in Philosophy

It was moved and seconded (Dicks/Newsham) to adopt the changes to the M.A. in Philosophy as proposed in document ASFC 87-9-D2. Vote: Carried.

11. Report on the Status of General Education Committee

D. Dicks recalled that last spring the question arose as to whether or not this committee would wish to continue meeting. The committee would like to continue working to present courses that can be structured into a minor which can be promoted as a broadening experience for students in Majors programmes. The committee hopes to submit a curriculum proposal in March that will address the need for general education.

12. Other Business

None.

13. Next Meeting

Friday, December 4th at 1:30 p.m.

14. Adjournment

It was moved and seconded (Drysdale/Decarie) to adjourn the meeting at 4:10 p.m. Vote: Carried.